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Letter dated 5 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2372 (2017), in which the Council requested me to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), working closely with the African Union and the Federal Government of Somalia. The review was aimed at taking stock of the transition of Somalia thus far and providing recommendations on the progressive transition from AMISOM to Somali security responsibility, including during the electoral period, taking into account the capacities of the Somali security forces.

Building on the recommendations of the special envoys of the African Union and the United Nations on AMISOM financing, the joint review mission took place from 10 to 19 May 2018. The mission was co-led by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the African Union Peace Support Operations Division, and included military, police, political, human rights and logistics experts from the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Field Support, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Office to the African Union, the African Union Commission and AMISOM. The European Union and States Members of the United Nations that are key security partners in Somalia also participated in the mission.

All AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries were also represented and all AMISOM sector commanders, the acting Force Commander and the acting AMISOM Police Commissioner participated in the review, along with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Francisco Madeira.

Consultations, including on the transition plan for Somalia, were held with national actors such as the National Security Adviser, the Chief of the Defence Forces and other representatives from the Somali National Army, and with international partners in Mogadishu and Addis Ababa. The joint review mission also briefed the President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo. Owing to ongoing and overlapping political developments, including a meeting of the Council of Interstate Cooperation, composed of the leaders of the federal member states of Somalia at the time of the joint review, the mission was unable to visit the federal member states.

The findings and recommendations of the joint review were considered by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 27 June 2018 at its 782nd meeting.

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Main findings

Overall, Somalia has made significant progress over the past 10 years. AMISOM has been vital in this journey. It has been providing the security that has allowed the political process to unfold and enabled the United Nations and international partners to maintain their presence and to carry out their functions in support of peacebuilding and State-building in Somalia. AMISOM played an important role in securing the 2016 electoral process across Somalia, which enabled a peaceful transition of power to the current federal political dispensation under President Farmajo and Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre. AMISOM will also be a necessary partner in enabling the conduct of the next elections, envisioned for 2020–2021, in accordance with the political road map of Somalia.

Notwithstanding the considerable positive developments under the current Federal Government, including the agreement on the national security architecture of Somalia, progress is still reversible. Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, demonstrating its continued ability to execute deadly terrorist attacks against civilians, Somali security forces and AMISOM. Continuing regional and clan divisions, coupled with the proliferation of arms in the country and the absence of the rule of law, also present chronic impediments to the prevention of violence and armed conflict. The small-scale but persistent presence of an armed group affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) remains a major concern. The unresolved dispute between Somalia and "Somaliland" has escalated into conflict between Puntland and "Somaliland" in the disputed Sool region, claiming the lives of dozens of Somalis and displacing some 10,000 people in recent weeks.

Somalis are also facing new challenges. Internal political differences are being exacerbated by international rivalries that have resulted in contestation by proxy in Somalia. This, in turn, is impacting the fragile relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and its federal member states and sowing the seeds of deeper division among Somalis. Owing to such friction between the Federal Government and federal member states, progress with respect to federalism through, inter alia, formalizing the status of federal member states, agreeing on an electoral model and expediting the creation of a federated and integrated Somali security sector, has been limited. Furthermore, differences between the Federal Government, parliamentary blocs and opposition elements have exacerbated long-standing clan divisions over representation at the leadership level and have increased instability and the risk of violence.

In the absence of national reconciliation and a revised Constitution defining a final political settlement and the principles of a federal State, the strategic location of Somalia and its rising geopolitical importance render it increasingly vulnerable to external influence and interference. This is a grave situation that underscores the pressing need for agreement among the country's leaders on key issues such as power- and resource-sharing and detailed security arrangements.

On the economic front, Somalia has made progress on the path towards the clearance of arrears and in implementing fiscal reforms that would enable it to attract grants and to regain access to financing from international financial institutions. Efforts by the Federal Government to increase revenue generation are bearing fruit, improving the prospects for Somalia being able to financially sustain its own security sector in the future. However, despite significant investment by the international community and the commendable achievements, notably by the Danab special forces and by security services in Jubbaland and Puntland, Somali security forces in the AMISOM area of operations largely lack the capacity, structures, institutional oversight and support to be able to take over security responsibility. Security infrastructure will have to be built with support from the international community and

then sustained progressively by the Federal Government. Success in building trust between the Federal Government and federal member states, as well as with the public, will be critical to making progress. Without that trust, the investment in Somali security capacity will not be firmly grounded. AMISOM remains indispensable to providing security and creating the necessary space for the political process to unfold, until Somali security institutions can shoulder that responsibility.

The transition plan for Somalia presents a real opportunity to consolidate all lines of activity related to military and police operations, institutional capacity-building and stabilization in a holistic effort under Somali ownership. There is, however, a significant lack of capacity and resources to adequately implement the plan's priorities and to improve the alignment between civilian and military leadership, between the Federal Government and federal member states, and among international partners that provide financial and capacity-building support.

The joint review determined that AMISOM had a continuing role to play in carrying out the priority tasks set out in resolution 2372 (2017) in all sectors, which are critical to achieving the strategic objectives of enabling the gradual handover of security responsibilities to Somali security forces, reducing the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups, and assisting Somali security forces in providing security for the political process, stabilization, reconciliation and peacebuilding.

As for the holding of elections in 2020–2021, the presence of AMISOM, alongside Somali security forces, will also be necessary, with the latter expected to have attained sufficient capacity to play a lead role in providing security for the elections.

The civilian component of AMISOM has made an important contribution in support of the political process, alongside its other civilian functions with respect to humanitarian support, civil affairs and human rights. AMISOM has closely collaborated with UNSOM (as the lead entity in supporting the political process), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and relevant Member States. The African Union Commission will undertake an assessment of the civilian component of AMISOM that will map the current deployment of AMISOM civilians and identify the added value that AMISOM can bring in support of the political process, including with respect to the need for a presence in key areas to complement that of UNSOM.

Developments since the previous joint review and resolution 2372 (2017)

On the basis of the desire of the Federal Government of Somalia to assume security responsibilities from AMISOM, albeit gradually and through a conditions-based handover, resolution 2372 (2017) reflects the intent of the Security Council to seek an exit strategy for AMISOM after 10 years of deployment. The resolution marked a shift in strategic focus from AMISOM to the building of Somali forces, with a view to transitioning security responsibility from the former to the latter. The resolution therefore presented the Federal Government and federal member states with the task of setting out their priorities for the transition, in consultation with AMISOM and its troop- and police-contributing countries and with international partners. In this manner, AMISOM and donors can align their efforts to support these agreed priorities and ensure a sustainable handover.

However, the real capacity of Somali security forces was not known, and, at the time of the joint review in 2017, the plans for transition were not realistic. Notwithstanding the development and execution of a Somali-owned Mogadishu stabilization plan, Somalia suffered the worst terrorist attack in its history, on 14 October 2017 in Mogadishu, which claimed over 500 lives and left many more injured. The attack, attributed to Al-Shabaab, underscored the deficiencies in capacity

and command and control of Somali security forces. It was followed by other deadly attacks by Al-Shabaab on civilian and military targets in Mogadishu and other parts of the country. These attacks clearly demonstrate that a premature handover would be risky and that the continued presence of AMISOM is necessary during the transition as Somalia builds the capability of its security forces and institutions and prepares for elections in 2020–2021.

In order to assess the baseline capacity of Somali security forces, and in response to the Council's request in resolution 2372 (2017) to that effect, the Federal Government, with the participation of AMISOM, the United Nations and international partners, led an operational readiness assessment of the Somali National Army in 2018. The assessment concluded that, as currently manned, trained and equipped, the Somali National Army is a fragile force with extremely weak command and control and military capabilities. Despite multiple training processes in recent years, the Somali National Army lacks a common doctrine and training standards; is extremely poorly equipped and not sustained; and has little to no infrastructure, including medical services at the battalion and brigade levels. In many areas, the Somali National Army is static and wholly defensive in nature, limited to occupying ground, and without the ability to hold newly recovered areas or prevent Al-Shabaab from retaking territory. On 29 May 2018, the Chief of the Defence Forces of Somalia endorsed the assessment findings in a memorandum to the President, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

Although progress is being made in the implementation of the country's new policing model, an operational readiness assessment determined that the Somali police force was almost entirely stationed in Mogadishu, and it also revealed serious gaps with regard to human resources, infrastructure, equipment and logistics. Many of the officers have reached retirement age, and several units are not operational. The assessment did not cover the emerging State police services or the regional forces that are to be integrated into the Darwish militarized police.

An additional operational readiness assessment of regional forces in the federal member states is ongoing and expected to be completed by the end of 2018. The national security architecture stipulates that regional forces should be integrated into the Somali national army or be absorbed into the Darwish, in accordance with authorized numbers. In February 2018, the National Security Council agreed that the Federal Government would provide wide-ranging support to the federal member state police services, including the Darwish, which were conducting operations against Al-Shabaab in conjunction with the Somali national army. Progress in that regard has been very limited.

Meanwhile, in line with resolution 2372 (2017), by 31 December 2017, AMISOM had reduced military personnel by 1,000 and made progress in generating an additional 500 police personnel towards the total authorized number of 1,040. At present, 718 AMISOM police personnel are deployed, including three of the five authorized formed police units, each with an augmented strength of 160 personnel. Pursuant to resolution 2372 (2017), the number of military personnel is to be further reduced by 1,000 by 30 October 2018.

Transition plan

Following the security conference held in Mogadishu on 4 December 2017 to take stock of progress and challenges in the implementation of the national security architecture, the Federal Government, in close partnership with federal member states, led the development of a transition plan for Somalia. Representatives of the federal member states, AMISOM, troop- and police-contributing countries, the

United Nations and other international partners participated in the development of the plan.

The transition plan provides a strategic framework for the gradual handover of security responsibility from AMISOM to Somali security institutions in three phases over the next four years, until December 2021. It outlines key priorities, milestones, indicators and conditions for the transition under a Somali (both federal and sub-federal) vision for security. In line with the agreement among all stakeholders that the plan should be comprehensive, it is organized into: (a) operational activities, including the identification and prioritization of locations where Somali security institutions would progressively assume full security responsibility, including through the deployment of forces recognized in the national security architecture; (b) institutional capacity-building, entailing the implementation of plans and programmes for that purpose, including the national security architecture, recommendations from the operational readiness assessments, and policing, justice and civil service reform; and (c) supporting activities, which involve the alignment of non-security efforts to create the conditions for a sustainable peace, including through stabilization, strengthening local governance and the rule of law, reconciliation, mediation, socioeconomic activities and activities aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism.

The transition plan has incorporated the views of the federal member states and other security stakeholders, including regional security council representatives, the Somali national army, AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries in the sectors, AMISOM police and international partners. The transition plan was presented by the National Security Adviser and endorsed at the 769th meeting of the Peace and Security Council on 30 April 2018, and subsequently presented and endorsed at a high-level meeting of the international community on security in Brussels, Belgium, on 2 May 2018, which also provided a platform for the Federal Government to highlight the key objectives of the first phase of the plan, which extends to mid-2019. The plan was approved by the National Security Council in its meetings held on 3 and 4 June 2018 in Baidoa. Three priority areas have been agreed for the initial stage of implementation: (a) the stadium in Mogadishu; (b) the town of Leego, in South-West State; and (c) the road between Mogadishu and Baidoa.

During the joint review mission, AMISOM, troop- and police-contributing countries and key security partners expressed their full support for the transition plan. All stakeholders agreed that the transition plan provided a vision and strategic direction for the process by which a gradual handover of security responsibility from AMISOM to Somali security institutions could take place. Detailed operational planning and implementation efforts were under way, requiring the alignment of efforts by the Federal Government, federal member states, AMISOM military and police components, troop- and police-contributing countries and international partners, under a holistic approach that encompassed military, police, support, stabilization, the rule of law and non-security elements under the three aspects of the transition plan. To that end, the joint review recommended that coordination between military operations and stabilization-related efforts continue to be enhanced with a focus on policing, rule of law, justice, including courts, prosecution offices and corrections facilities, mechanisms to protect human rights and the provision of basic services to the population. It was agreed during the joint review that existing coordination structures under the comprehensive approach to security should be fully utilized by AMISOM, troop- and police-contributing countries and other partners. All actors should be guided by existing Somali federal and State frameworks on transition, stabilization and reconciliation.

The implementation of the transition plan in the three priority areas in the pilot stage is an opportunity to test the effectiveness of the holistic approach to the

transition and to create a template for future locations and operations. It is also important that progress continue to be made with respect to other tasks and priorities of the first phase of the transition plan, in parallel with the planning and implementation of the plan in the three priority locations.

On the basis of consultations on the transition plan, including the role of AMISOM, the joint review determined that the implementation of the transition plan should be constantly informed by the evolving situation on the ground, with the participation and agreement of major stakeholders. Specifically, implementation should be carried out in a flexible manner, adjusted to specific locations and situations, with due consideration given to progress made in stabilization activities and to the political situation in a given context. Future priorities should be decided in consultation with AMISOM prior to their adoption, and each of the tasks under the detailed plans require realistic costs assessments and a framework for resourcing. Updates on the implementation of the plan in the priority areas during the first phase, including costing, will be presented at the Somalia partnership forum to be held in Brussels on 16 and 17 July 2018.

Recommendations for the reconfiguration of AMISOM

In its resolution 2372 (2017), the Security Council envisioned AMISOM shifting towards a support role and Somali security forces progressively assuming responsibility for security. This continues to be the case, alongside the priority tasks that are already part of the AMISOM mandate. With the development of the transition plan and considering the AMISOM transformation proposed by the special envoys of the African Union and the United Nations, the shift will require AMISOM to reconfigure itself to align its strategic objectives, presence and mandated tasks with the implementation of the transition plan, starting with the three priority locations in the pilot stage. The joint review examined what the proposed reconfiguration of AMISOM would entail with respect to its police, military, support and civilian functions. The findings of the joint review and the recommendations for each of those areas should inform a revised AMISOM concept of operations.

The reconfiguration of AMISOM would strengthen the capabilities of AMISOM force headquarters and improve cohesion and coordination among AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as among AMISOM, Somalis and bilateral partners. The reconfiguration should aim to ensure that troop- and police-contributing countries work together in a coordinated manner to achieve a unified operational objective. In that regard, the possibility of multiple troop- and police-contributing countries being active in a sector, instead of individual troop- and police-contributing countries operating largely independently in their own sectors, could be examined in the AMISOM concept of operations. The reconfiguration should transform AMISOM into a more nimble, dynamic and integrated mission that is better coordinated with all partners and Somalis. Implementation of the transition plan in two of the three priority locations in the first phase, namely, Leego and the Mogadishu-Baidoa main supply route, involve, for the first time, two AMISOM sectors (sectors 1 and 3) and two political entities (the Federal Government and South-West State). This presents an opportunity for AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries on one hand, and Somali authorities on the other, to demonstrate their capacity for collaboration and coordination in planning and implementation.

With respect to the reconfiguration, it was recommended that, first, a coordination platform, such as a joint operations cell or "fusion cell", be established at AMISOM force headquarters. That platform, with the participation of ranked liaison officers from each sector, supported by force headquarters staff and external experts, would be mandated to provide the AMISOM Force Commander with daily operational information from all sectors and intelligence gathered by international

partners, together with analysis of the combined picture. The platform would complement the strategic oversight mechanisms of the African Union and would strengthen planning and coordination among AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries under the authority of the Force Commander. Funding options for the international experts include seconding Member States bearing the costs for their deployment or voluntary contributions through the AMISOM trust fund administered by UNSOS.

Second, it was proposed that the military mentoring and assistance role of AMISOM be expanded into a more robust combat mentoring role. Trained Somali national army units and Somali security forces identified to take part in specific joint operations should be gathered and mentored for combat readiness before commencing operations, including through joint exercises within AMISOM-secured areas. Doing so would facilitate coordination, cooperation, and de-confliction between the Somali national army, Somali security forces and AMISOM, especially in areas where responsibility is being transferred to Somali authorities.

Third, following the positive results of the pilot project undertaken in Kismaayo and Baidoa to train the Somali police, it was recommended that the Security Council give AMISOM a police training role. AMISOM should expand its training activities, as foreseen under the United Nations-AMISOM joint police programme, launched in June 2018, and in line with the new policing model and police plans of federal member states that have already been approved by the National Security Council. In support of the implementation of the first phase of the transition plan, the training and mentoring activities of the AMISOM police component should be expanded with a view to extending the Somali police presence to locations along the Mogadishu-Baidoa route. The joint police programme should take into account projects that are required to implement the transition plan, while maintaining the implementation of the country's new policing model as its primary focus. The AMISOM police component should participate fully in existing coordination mechanisms. The African Union Commission should expedite the generation and deployment of the two formed police units needed to reach the total number of police personnel that has been authorized. The United Nations, through its Police Division, stands ready to provide the required support, including by facilitating the training of identified units.

Fourth, the AMISOM reconfiguration requires that a comprehensive assessment of the capacities and readiness of AMISOM be conducted jointly by the African Union and the United Nations, with support from international partners, at the earliest opportunity. The operational readiness assessment of AMISOM, together with those of the Somali security entities that have been conducted or that are under way, would present a complete picture of the capacities of all security actors in Somalia. It would provide the baseline for the AMISOM statement of unit requirements to inform the reconfiguration and the determination of how to best support the transition and would serve to increase transparency and donor confidence. The findings of the operational readiness assessment should feed into the development of a revised concept of operations and the technical review proposed below, on the basis of which the provision of key enablers, such as appropriate aviation assets, could be actively examined and pursued to, inter alia, form the core element of a possible quick reaction force under the Force Commander.

In parallel with supporting the implementation of the transition plan in the pilot locations, AMISOM should continue its priority tasks and activities in the implementation of its mandate in all sectors. That includes the further detailing of the conditions that should be created by the end of the first phase and determining appropriate modalities to achieve those conditions. In that regard, and as recommended pursuant to the joint review, AMISOM sector 6, which covers an unspecified area around Kismaayo, in Jubbaland, is expected to be closed and

subsumed into sector 2. The Jubbaland state forces in Kismaayo town are among the most capable in Somalia, and the activities of the AMISOM contingent in sector 6, which consists of approximately 1,600 troops, are limited. Decommissioning sector 6 may also provide flexibility for future troop reconfigurations and reductions and the reallocation of logistical support.

The AMISOM reconfiguration process should begin with the joint AMISOM operational readiness assessment, followed by a blueprint for the reconfiguration created under the responsibility of the Force Commander and sector commanders, to be agreed with the Somalis and endorsed by the Peace and Security Council. The planning and endorsement of the reconfiguration is expected to be completed by January 2019, at the time of the technical review, with implementation likely to continue until mid-2019. The entire reconfiguration exercise in support of the transition plan is expected to be completed in approximately 12 months.

Support implications for the African Union Mission in Somalia and Somali security forces

The joint review found continuing gaps in logistics, equipment and funding for the primary security actors in Somalia, namely, AMISOM military and police components, the Somali national army and Somali police services, and concluded that the implementation of the first phase of the transition plan, while simultaneously conducting military operations and mandated tasks in all other sectors, might require additional resources to meet support requirements. The joint review confirmed the need for force enablers and force multipliers to support efforts to conduct concurrent operations, both in the context of the transition plan and in wider sector operations. The comprehensive AMISOM operational readiness assessment, as proposed above, will provide an accurate understanding of AMISOM capacities and needs, including force enablers and force multipliers, and serve as the basis for further specifying AMISOM support requirements.

A working group established by the United Nations and the African Union to develop a concept of operations for AMISOM aviation and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, on the basis of the broader strategic concept of operations, will also contribute to clarity on aviation and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance requirements to support concurrent tasks.

Once that is completed, the generation of the identified capacities will need to be expedited by the African Union and the United Nations. The deployment of those assets will necessitate a thorough risk assessment and related mitigation measures, as outlined in the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

The full capacity of the Somali security forces to deploy and assume security responsibilities in the first phase of the transition plan is not yet known, as the Somali authorities are in the process of identifying capable Somali national army and regional forces for this purpose. Support requirements for Somali security forces, including regional forces, will become clearer as the transition gets under way.

A system of logistical support for Somali forces during the first phase is required to facilitate a sustainable handover, in the light of an impending withdrawal of support in locations where AMISOM is no longer present, which could deter Somali forces from assuming full responsibility. The joint review highlighted the need to establish the support requirements for Somali security forces, including police and regional forces, and to develop viable options for how those could be addressed. That support should include the 2,400 Puntland troops that have been integrated into the Somali national army, provided that they are dedicated for use in operations against Al-Shabaab, ISIL-affiliated groups and piracy. In addition, Somali security forces

need to have enhanced capacity to deal with improvised explosive devices, which pose a major threat to their security.

UNSOS support should eventually be adjusted in line with emerging demands during the AMISOM reconfiguration and the transition process. Following an assessment of the support requirements of Somali security forces and an analysis to determine who is best placed on the basis of comparative advantage to deliver that support, the UNSOS mandate with respect to the provision of support to AMISOM and the Somali national army could be adjusted to reflect the operational requirements in the first phase of the transition plan.

Accountability and compliance

The joint review assessed progress in implementing the recommendations set out in the matrix annexed to my letter to the Security Council on the findings and recommendations of the 2017 joint review, which were aimed at strengthening mechanisms and measures to better prevent and address human rights and international humanitarian law violations by AMISOM.

Progress has been achieved in implementing some of the recommendations, which include the translation and dissemination of AMISOM rules of engagement in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law; in-mission training for troops and specific training for staff, including on accountability, led by the African Union; the development of an African Union-United Nations predeployment manual to facilitate the delivery of predeployment training by troop- and police-contributing countries after the transfer of that responsibility to them; the development of African Union-wide policy guidelines on conduct and discipline; and the allocation of $200,000 by the African Union to facilitate ex gratia payments or amends for harm to civilians allegedly caused by AMISOM in 2018.

Nevertheless, gaps remain in addressing cases of alleged violations by AMISOM, including in respect of feedback and the exchange of information on the findings of the investigations into those allegations. Other gaps include delayed responses to allegations, sometimes caused by delayed feedback from the sectors; differences in the methodologies used by the UNSOM human rights team and the AMISOM human rights unit, leading to discrepancies in figures; unsustainable or inadequate funding to fully operationalize ex gratia payments to victims of harm caused by AMISOM troops; and the inability of AMISOM to follow up on cases in the field owing to there being a limited number of human rights officers to monitor and report on human rights issues in the six AMISOM sectors. Additional consultations between AMISOM and the United Nations on how to address such challenges are necessary to improve results.

The joint review recommended a process to further agree on modalities to enhance coordination of and support for investigations, including an assessment of how agreed recommendations on that issue from the previous joint review could be implemented. The matrix for recommendations on measures should therefore continue to be used as a tool to monitor and report on compliance and the implementation of the measures.

In the context of the transition, with anticipated joint operations including or involving the use of regional forces, the risk of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law is likely to increase. AMISOM compliance measures need to be stepped up alongside measures for Somali security forces, in particular those linked to identification (including numbers, locations and minimum vetting), command and control and internal oversight, measures to avoid the use of children, measures to prevent the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse, and timely responses to allegations, including through investigations.

There is a need to strengthen coordination including through the United Nations-AMISOM/United Nations joint working group on human rights due diligence policy and joint engagement with Somali security forces to ensure accountability and respect for international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. The application of the human rights due diligence policy remains pivotal. Effectively preventing and addressing violations by AMISOM in the context of its operations will contribute to enhancing the likelihood of meeting its security objectives.

Implications for the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia

While the strategic objectives and priority tasks for AMISOM should remain largely as set out in resolution 2372 (2017), they should now be aligned with the transition plan. AMISOM should continue its core tasks, with adjustments as outlined in the present letter, including: (a) protecting main population centres, including the presence of international actors, securing and enabling political and reconciliation processes, the maintenance of law and order, public safety and early recovery, in close coordination with Somali security forces, while implementing the transfer of responsibility to Somali security forces and institutions in accordance with the transition plan; (b) contributing effectively to securing main supply routes, beginning with the Mogadishu-Baidoa route; (c) conducting targeted joint operations with Somali security forces to further degrade Al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups, with progressively increasing Somali participation and with appropriate mitigation measures in place, including with regard to minimizing the threat posed by improvised explosive devices; (d) mentoring Somali national army units involved in joint operations in combat readiness, including through joint exercises prior to the conduct of operations; and (e) contributing to the training and deployment of the Somali police, in close collaboration with UNSOM, and in line with the national security architecture, the new policing model and State police plans.

The coming months will be critical in assessing progress in the implementation of the first phase of the transition plan and its three pilot priorities, as well as progress in the reconfiguration of AMISOM. With the aim of enabling an effective AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the transition plan at this early stage, I support the joint review's recommendation that the Security Council extend the AMISOM mandate for one year.

The joint review recommended that a technical review be conducted in January 2019 to assess the state and effectiveness of the AMISOM reconfiguration in support of the transition, and, on that basis, recommend how the next 1,000-person reduction in AMISOM military personnel, mandated by the Security Council to take place by 30 October 2018, should be implemented.

It was recommended that the reduction be postponed to February 2019 to better enable AMISOM to complete the planning and initiate the execution of its reconfiguration in support of the handover of responsibility for the three priority areas in the first phase of the transition plan. Doing so would allow for proper planning on the basis of the AMISOM operational readiness assessment, the development of a concept of operations and the implementation of the pilot stage of the transition plan. It would also avoid reductions that are not aligned with the AMISOM reconfiguration and support to the transition, including untimely reductions in active sectors.

If agreed by the Security Council, the proposed technical review would evaluate progress and the effectiveness of AMISOM reconfiguration and positioning in support of the transition, on the basis of the criteria set out in the present letter, focusing, in particular, on measures to improve coordination and collaboration among AMISOM, its troop- and police-contributing countries, Somalis and international partners. It would also review progress in the operations being carried out pursuant to the first

phase of the transition plan and assess the pace of the plan's implementation, including by providing an updated understanding of the state and readiness of Somali security forces and their integration in accordance with the national security architecture. In the light of its findings, the review would aim to provide observations on the trajectory of future reductions in AMISOM uniformed personnel. The technical review would be conducted by the United Nations and the African Union, in close collaboration with the transition plan implementation team, and its report would be shared informally with the team and all interested partners. The report could also be discussed in an informal interactive dialogue with the Council in February.

Observations

I would like to thank the African Union Commission for the strong collaboration with the United Nations in carrying out the fourth joint review of AMISOM. The participation of the Somali authorities in the review for the second time is equally commendable and is a positive indication that, despite continuing challenges, Somalia is on the path towards taking full responsibility for its security. I would also like to thank members of the Security Council and the European Union for their participation and engagement in the joint review mission. I commend AMISOM, UNSOM, UNSOS and the United Nations Office to the African Union for facilitating the joint review exercise and for their steadfast efforts to enhance collaboration among the security partners of Somalia. I endorse the recommendations of the joint review as outlined above and urge the Council to consider them positively.

I wish to highlight the presence in the joint review mission of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and representatives of AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries, along with the participation of the acting AMISOM Force Commander, the acting AMISOM Police Commissioner and all sector commanders. Their participation enhanced the inclusivity of the exercise and the credibility of its outcomes. I encourage AMISOM and its troop- and police-contributing countries to continue to carry out the priority tasks towards achieving its strategic objectives, as set out by the Security Council, and to implement the necessary transformation of AMISOM on the basis of the outcomes of the joint review, thereby demonstrating full commitment to the Somali transition.

Somalia faces a complex combination of new and old threats to its stability and progress. Recurring humanitarian crises such as ongoing floods add to the suffering of the Somali people, who continue to demonstrate exemplary resilience in the face of formidable challenges. Alongside the threat of Al-Shabaab, its affiliates and other non-State armed groups, continuing differences between the Federal Government and federal member states, exacerbated by external influence and interference, are major obstacles to the formation of a functioning federal State. I urge the leaders of Somalia to put aside their differences and forge the necessary agreements, under a common vision, to build a functioning federal State for all Somalis. The people of Somalia, already among the poorest and more vulnerable in the world, must not pay the price arising from a failure to strengthen political unity.

At the same time, the international community should redouble its efforts to shield Somalia from the impact of external rivalries that threaten to reverse the gains achieved so far. I urge the Security Council, the African Union, including its Peace and Security Council, and Member States to examine ways and exert the effort necessary to protect Somalia from further division.

I welcome the development of the transition plan as an important sign of the commitment of the Federal Government of Somalia and its federal member states towards taking ownership and responsibility for security. As the leaders of Somalia

continue on the path towards resolving key questions in relation to federalism, which is to be enshrined in a permanent Constitution, political differences should not be allowed to prevent the implementation of the transition plan and the establishment of an effective and accountable security sector that is capable of gradually assuming responsibility from AMISOM. Federal and sub-federal line ministries and security institutions must continue to work together closely to realize the national security architecture, including by accelerating the integration of regional forces into national and State security institutions, in accordance with human rights standards. All efforts should be made to ensure Somali ownership and unity of purpose at the federal and State levels, as well as wider buy-in across Somali society, for the successful implementation of the transition plan.

Equally, the implementation of the transition plan will not be possible without the full participation, coordination and support of AMISOM and its troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as key security partners. I welcome the commitment to the transition plan expressed by AMISOM, troop- and police-contributing countries and partners during the joint review, and encourage them to continue this spirit of engagement in the detailed planning and operationalization of the plan through existing mechanisms, as part of a comprehensive approach to security. Implementation of the first phase and its pilot priorities will be a test case for the AMISOM-Somali security institutions nexus and should be fully supported. Lessons learned from the early stage should be used to adapt the transition effort, thereby enhancing its credibility and prospects.

Given the existing gaps in their current state of readiness, most Somali national army units outside Mogadishu cannot assume responsibilities from AMISOM forces. They lack the collective military capability to conduct effective offensive operations on their own, being unable to independently sustain themselves, and require significant investment if they are to become a legitimate force in Somalia. I commend the efforts of the Federal Government to draw a clear and transparent picture of the status of the Somali national army, which greatly assisted in further transition planning. The endorsement by the Chief of the Defence Forces of the findings of the operational readiness assessment of the Somali national army is an important step prior to the finalization of the joint review's findings and recommendations.

In this regard, I commend the integration of 2,400 Puntland force personnel into the Somali national army, and urge Somali authorities to expedite the identification and integration of regional forces in other federal member states into the Somali security forces, in accordance with the national security architecture and the agreements of the National Security Council. I also encourage the Somali authorities to complete the operational readiness assessment of regional forces, which would provide a better understanding of their readiness to conduct joint operations, and to conduct continuous assessments of Somali security forces as they reorganize in support of the transition.

I urge the international partners of Somalia, as signatories to the security pact agreed in London in May 2017, in recognition and support of the country's efforts to assume responsibility for its own security, to step forward and provide the support and resources needed for the successful implementation of the transition plan. At the same time, I urge the Federal Government and federal member states to recognize that progress in taking the political decisions needed for essential reforms, and concrete steps towards the implementation of the transition plan, will be critical to the availability of resources.

I reiterate my call for predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM, and refer to the report of the special envoys on AMISOM financing, submitted to the Security Council on 19 April 2018, which makes a strong case for continued

predictable financing for AMISOM as it adapts in support of the country's transformation. The joint review has provided the parameters for that transformation through the proposed AMISOM reconfiguration, for which financial support will be critical.

On the whole, I am encouraged by the steps being taken towards a gradual, conditions-based handover of security to Somali security forces and institutions. I commend AMISOM for successfully completing its first drawdown of 1,000 military personnel in December 2017 and urge AMISOM to complete the generation of the remaining additional police personnel that have been authorized. Over the next several months, AMISOM and Somali security forces will undertake operations and tasks necessary to implement the first phase of the transition in the three priority locations. This will be a critical period that will test both the credibility of the transition plan and the effectiveness of AMISOM support to the plan. AMISOM should be afforded the time to complete its reconfiguration, with an extension of the timeline for further reductions in its uniformed personnel. The proposed reconfiguration would not only enable AMISOM to more effectively deliver on its mandate in support of the Somali transition, but it would also improve the prospects for sustainable reductions in uniformed personnel as a result of the creation of a more efficient and transformed AMISOM, in line with a conditions-based transition.

In this overall context, assurances on issues related to accountability in the use of resources underpin any enhanced United Nations support, and the human rights due diligence policy remains the cornerstone of such support either to AMISOM by virtue of its reconfiguration, or to Somali security forces.

I take note of the intention of the African Union Commission to conduct a review of the AMISOM civilian component. I consider that, pursuant to resolution 2372 (2017), the focus should remain on tasks that enable the delivery on the core mandate of AMISOM, including political engagement with respect to all aspects of mandate delivery. The complementarity of mandates and close collaboration at all levels should drive the work of AMISOM civilians and UNSOM.

I pay tribute and reiterate my deep gratitude to the brave men and women of AMISOM and to the Somali security forces, whose courage and sacrifices give hope to millions of Somalis in their quest for a durable peace and a future free from armed conflict.

I also express my appreciation for the work of the leaders and participants in the joint review. I am aware of the challenges that they faced and the proud manner in which they sought to resolve them.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**